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A
DISCOURSE 24

PREACHED IN

THE CHURCH OF THE MESSIAH,

OCTOBER 22, 1854,

ON THE DEATH OF JACOB THOMAS.

BY HENRY BACON, PASTOR.

"Sure the last end
Of the good man is peace! How calm his exit!
Night dews fall not more gently to the ground;
Not weary worn-out winds expire so soft."

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1854.

THE
PRAYER BEFORE SERMON.

INFINITE SPIRIT! Thou who hast been our dwelling-place in all generations—thy love the home of humanity in all times and ages! We thank Thee for life, and for all the powers by which we are capable of knowing and loving Thee. This hour is Thine, help us to improve it to Thy glory! For what we have felt of the sanctity of this day, we praise Thee; and for whatever we have been enabled to improve of its privileges, we adore Thee. And now, Father of our spirits, help us to come acceptably before Thee by the sincerity and humility of our hearts, by a fresh longing for thy presence, by a new delight in thy love, that our sins may be forgiven, and our hearts be reconciled to Thee. We thank thee, O God, for all the varied manifestations of thyself, by which we are invited to commune with Thee and are drawn to Thy worship—our thoughts elevated, our desires purified, and life

is made more sacred and beautiful. But above all do we thank thee, O Father, for the new and living way which Thou hast opened in the mediation of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ! In His name, and through His mediation, we would come to Thee to-night; O grant us the power to see him more clearly, to know him more perfectly, to trust in him more confidently, that we may receive that unction by which we may know all things essential to our spiritual good. For his life, his perfection, his ministry, his gospel, his undying love, we thank Thee; and O Thou Ever-living Spirit, may the power of his word be felt by us and be shown by the virtues and graces to which he hath called us. May our gratitude be fervent that he hath given a religion suited to all times and all ages. For the illumination it hath cast on the paths of duty, for its illustrations of the meek and heroic virtues made possible to the faithful, for its pitying love for the sinful, and for its encouragement to lay hold of eternal life, we, with full hearts, would adore Thee. From the realms of immortality it has brought a never-setting light to shine on the once dark and silent sea of death. In that light, we lift our thanks for the work of the gospel in the heart of childhood, imparting the highest aims, the noblest courage and the dearest purity. We adore thee, O God, for its power in manhood and womanhood, bestowing the most sacred charm on existence, endearing the humanities and amenities of home and society, and directing all strength and ambition to things imperishable and divine. And,

O, our Father, endless thanks be thine, that the gospel limits not its power to life's prime, but waits upon old age, with its truths and its glories! How dark, O God, must existence be when the outward eyes grow dim and the soul has no vision of celestial things! Our eyes have seen Thee with the old and grey-headed, and thou hast shown us the hoary head as a crown of glory because found in the ways of righteousness. We have heard the testimonies of Thy saints proclaiming the newness of Thy love, where to the worldling all was dreariness and death. And do Thou to-night help us, in the plenitude of thy grace, fervently to thank Thee for the prolonged and peaceful and beautiful life of our venerable friend whom we sadly miss in our homes and in this place of prayer. We have borne the mortal form to its honorable burial,—thanks to Thy name! the grave is not for the spirit. We can see him here no more. His eye will not shine upon us in the fellowship of worship; the sweetness of his smile and the gentleness of his manners, can be repeated no more. O help us, compassionate Father, to keep his image clear in our souls, to talk with the wisdom of his years, to venerate the sweet sanctity of his cheerfulness, to honor his constant love of Divine things. By his gentleness and quietude, by his serenity and activity, by his regard for the Sabbath and his delight in the ordinances of Thine house, by his enjoyment of life and his readiness for death, let us be instructed in the harmonies and strength and attractions of the Christian character. And while we pray that his memory may be

continued amid the ministries of this sanctuary by all that it has brought of discipleship near to us, hear us, O God of all comfort, for those who have felt his death most deeply, most keenly of all ! A beautiful light hath gone out in their homes ! The sweet persuasion of a good man's eye is with them no more ! His counsel they miss, his absence hath shattered full many a joy. The music of his step on their threshold can salute them no more, and his chair and his couch, O God, are empty ! Help them to that thankfulness for his long life that will leave no room in their hearts for lamentation. How great was Thy love in making him so much to them—may it all lead them to Thee, nearer and nearer. So free from disease, so fresh in his affections, so warm in his sympathies, so at ease with the young, so loving to man and so loyal to Thee, how great is the boon that they had him so long ! Sanctify to them the death, so sudden to them, so peaceful to himself. To his children and their children, and to all who were near to him, do Thou bring the teachings of Thy Spirit, that they may emulate his virtues and perpetuate his influence. And when, O God, the voice of friends shall cease to speak of the departed, may his memory be fresh in their hearts, filling the places that have known him with something of that cheerful sanctity which made his chair the centre of sacred joys. We praise Thee that thus we still may have him, and may feel the persuasions of his life to loyalty to Jesus, in whose redemption he trusted, and in whose love he died.

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We pray for the aged, who survive him—for the aged of this Church, and of all Churches, and of this community. May his God be theirs! Help them to find Thee more, to follow every leading of Thy Spirit, that they may be in the right posture when called away.

And now, Spirit of all true guidance, aid us in the special duty of this hour. Keep our lips from insincerity while we speak; give us humility while we hear. May Christian Old Age come before us to the honor of our Redeemer, and in grateful memory of our venerable friend.

And when our service is over, help us to go to our homes with purer and nobler views of life, to be wrought into our characters by vigorous and orderly loyalty to Thee. May we take up the doing of what this hour shall teach us is good, and thus make days speak, and years teach wisdom. O thus shall our souls be strong in Thee, Thy love shall shine on all our paths, and when the call comes to bid us away, we shall be found in the field of duty, where those serve Thee who can only patiently wait.

And now unto Thee be homage unspeakable, for the hope that centres in Thine unchangeable love, that bends the bow of promise above the grave and shows us the immortals in the visions of faith, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.



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DISCOURSE.

JOB XI. 17.

“AND THINE AGE SHALL BE CLEARER THAN THE NOONDAY; THOU SHALT SHINE;
THOU SHALT BE AS THE MORNING.”

IN nothing has the literature of the world been more deficient than in brave words on Old Age. Here and there through the centuries can be found an effort to reason with a common idea of the discomfort of old age, but the argument is rather a confession of the difficulties of the theme, than a triumphant treatment of it. The Bible has the best words on this subject, and there the aged must look for the auroral lights of the fresh morning. However the old Hebrew religion, and the far away theology of the patriarchs, may be regarded but as preparatory to something better, yet in their literature “a good old age” is recognized, and a lofty

estimate is put on what man may make his latest years to yield of comfort and repose. How splendid the image in this most ancient poem where my text is found,—“Thine age shall be clearer than the noonday; thou shalt shine; thou shalt be as the morning.” The mind seems here to labor for something expressive of what the virtuous soul can pour out on existence from its own fountains of beauty and joy. It does not make all freshness to lie in the Eden of the past, but when the eye is sobered by the solemn experience of years, it may see a charm in the forms of existence which Youth was not wise enough to behold. “Clearer than the noonday” must demand supernatural light; God in the soul shining out on the passing years; and such light does come from the spirit of holy age, to make life radiant where otherwise it would be dark indeed. The man is as the morning—fresh, buoyant and hopeful; and no walk in the early hours with all the surroundings of Nature’s happiest aspect and blandest airs, can be more refreshing than his presence.

The burden of the Old Testament is, Long Life a Blessing. “The first commandment with promise,” has its promise in this, “that thy days may be long upon

the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee;" and in many instances we find length of years held out in the right hand of Wisdom, as though that were a higher gift for man's happiness than the riches and honor which are extended in the left. And how pleasant is that image of the Psalmist where, in comparing human life to a fruit tree, he dignifies the righteous by declaring, "They shall bring forth fruit in Old Age;"—as in the autumn time we have looked up amid the almost leafless branches of a venerable tree, and seen hanging there, goldenly in the sun, the richest fruit in the orchard, mellowing to the perfect taste. So the old image in the book from whence our text was taken,—“Thou shalt come to thy grave in a full age, like as a shock of corn cometh in his season,” that is quickly plucked because the husbandman delights so much in the fulness and the ripeness.

But pleasant as are the Old Testament pictures of what old age may be and has been, it is not till we open the New Testament that we become fully satisfied. There, almost on the very threshold, we meet aged Simeon, the just and devout man, and a light clearer than his noonday shines forth from his saintly counte-

nance as he holds the infant Redeemer in his arms, and exclaims, "Lord, now let thy servant depart in peace!" We see him only once. He stands before us the representative of a serenity and joy in old age which, through the religion of that "unspeakable gift" of God which he held in his arms, should be the inheritance of many. How completely in the picture of aged John, the apostle and evangelist, at Ephesus; and in the portrait of "Paul the aged," at Rome, do we see the fulfilment of all that Simeon idealized. Yes, Christian Old Age is something fresh in the world's experience and history; and perhaps no theme has been more neglected by the Pulpit than this, important as it is, and showing by the forces which Christianity imparts to the character, how the noonday of philosophy was to be dimmed by the superior brightness of revealed truth.

The Scriptures do indeed exhaust all the striking and universal emblems of the brevity and uncertainty of life, but they also abound with references to old age, and the immunities which virtue and holiness may secure. The pulpit overlooks too much this comprehensiveness, and thereby it makes its great inducement for attention to religion to be, the brevity and uncertainty of life. It

deals more in saints that die young, than in those who live to old, fresh age. The idea seems to be, that every word which may be said touching the possibility of an extended life on earth, will serve to lessen the hold of the ministry on those to whom religion is rather a preservative from evil in the immortal state, than a guide, joy, inspiration and consolation in the present. The pulpit deprecates a *this* worldliness, but directs the same passion to *another* worldliness, without seeming to discern that the sphere of application does not change the character of a principle.

My friends, we need as much the voice of the Bible where it speaks of the lights of old age,—“at evening time there shall be light,”—as we need its word where it speaks of life as a vapor, a breath, a shadow. Sometimes a vapor hangs long in the sky, and wears its richest and most attractive hues when evening is stepping to her throne. By these wise and courageous words on old age, religion is brought visibly before youth and young manhood in a future life which they can understand. As the mother is to the child its best ideal of the Deity, so the venerable old man is to the buoyant youth an image of immortality. The distance between the years of young

wonder and the accumulated experience of the aged sire, seems as near a grand idea of Eternity as the opening mind can receive; and when old age is adorned with all the virtues and graces of a true religious life, and has “that which *should* accompany old age, as honor, love, obedience, troops of friends,” then the influence of virtue on the future is seen—then the young heart understands what a future life there is actually lived before its sight, in which the influence of youthful holiness is expressed, as the life of the vine shows itself in those richest clusters which may be the last to ripen. Hence it is that the best thing in the education of many a young man has been, the society of an old person—some venerable sire or relative, or friend, who seemed old when the young man first began to be conscious of veneration and love, and who always commanded his attention, respect and loyalty; towards whom he always looked with much of the old spirit of homage to a king. Such a youth has grown up like a young oak protected by the broad arms and noble trunk of a neighboring tree, till it spread out its own branches in a strength which had been evenly nourished, and lifted its harmonious proportions in something of homage to the shielding oak by its side. There

is a peculiar grace and gentleness, a lyrical sweetness in the manners of a young man who has lived in the ripening influence of genial old age; and in his thoughts and opinions there will always be found more of strength and consistency than might otherwise have been expected. He has felt the reports which the aged one has brought from the far-off years concerning the rectitude of the Divine dealings—the certainty of Heaven's retributions—the awful and beautiful power of memory, and that linking of years to years, despite all the changes of flesh and blood, which almost demonstrates the immortality of mind. The old man is listened to as we listen to one who has been in a far-off land, and who has survived disasters which sent many to their graves. And thus he is restored to something of the place which old age held among the ancients, when the old man's memory was the best book, and his words had in them something of inspiration and prophecy. That which in ancient times the wise and good of the aged were to the community, they are now in the smaller circle of their homes; and it is always a happy revelation of character where we see an intense attention given by the young to the old—like Samuel at the feet of Eli, sitting dumb in great-

ness of thought when, as the old man has gone over the past, he comes to the present to think of the future in silence, "walking thoughtful on the solemn shore of that vast ocean he must sail so soon."

And then too, what is there more hallowing in a home than the presence of venerable age! In my ideal of a true home there is always a chair and a corner and a couch for the aged one. A dignity is given to a home in this way that nothing else can impart. And those ministrations which the aged sometimes think must be only troubles, are in fact delights pure as those we catch from some painting that has engrossed our eye, or some sculpture that lives with us to purify and calm.

Happy that home where Christian old age has its place! Its chair is more than a throne. It is an altar, where the mystery of life is most felt—where the heart is made to own the power of gentleness, and to feel how great a thing is that gift of faith in Christ by which life is kept fresh and age is made "clearer than the noonday." *There* religion is made real. It is not doctrine, or creed, or profession; it is a life; it lives; and better than the most logical persuasion is the sweet and awe-inspiring conviction which there falls upon the

heart, shot from the solemn and yet loving eye of the aged Christian.

CHRISTIAN OLD AGE! ah, *that* is a finer thing than Cicero ever dreamed of; and when he wrote that best of ancient treatises on old age, in his dream, as it were, of Cato, a vision had been given him of only a part of what we have seen in real life. And that part too has been seen independent of those surroundings which he deemed essential to anything of endurance, dignity and happiness in the aged. Had he seen some of the embodiments of the Christian ideal of old age, which it has been the privilege of us all to see, he would have turned from all his philosophic meditations as the traveller turns from the glitter of the cold stars to the auroral skies and the suffusing warmth of the morning. Happier are our children, in this respect, than even wise and eloquent Cicero, for they are permitted to sun themselves in something better than the noonday, as they see what

“Kings and Prophets waited for,

But died without the sight.”

Yes, the world waited for the coming of Jesus that it might see Simeon, that John the evangelist might be

possible, and that so magnificent a specimen of the old man might be given as was given in "Paul the Aged," "ready to be offered," when conscious that "the time of his departure was at hand."

Christian old age in one of its most attractive manifestations has been shown to those of us who knew that venerable sire, whose mortal form during the past week has been borne to the honorable burial. One Sabbath here with us in our faith and worship, the next with the great congregation of the dead! Out in the busy world in the afternoon of Friday; giving his signature in business with clear thought and undimmed eye; sitting till late in the evening where the lights were lit in his quiet home, where the bride of his manhood and the children of his love looked down from the truthful pictures, and when the morning was coming with its light and joy, he, without a struggle, without a sigh, without a motion, had "another morn than ours." He entered upon his citizenship in the City of the Immortals, whose streets become attractive by the presenee of the beloved who have gone before—where the dumb speak, and those who have grown old together are young again.

I could not find it in my heart to let his death pass without an attempt at a Christian use of it in this pulpit. I wish publicly to thank God that I have known and have had the friendship of that venerable man. I feel and shall continue to feel an influence from his life that has done me good. It makes the Christian graces so real. It animates in the pursuit of those virtues to which our Master calls us. It demonstrates that old age may have its freshness, and that life may wither as silently as the grass, as gracefully as the flower, as prophetically as the field that enfolds the seeds of the harvest of another year.

“Of no distemper, of no blast he died,
But fell like autumn fruit that mellowed long;
Or, like a clock worn out with eating time,
The wheels of weary life stood still at last.”

Terrible in its shock to hearts that centred much love and happiness in him, yet his preference was answered in the manner of his death. He said he could take no part in the prayer, “From sudden death, good Lord deliver us!” and when told it was an awful thing to “enter suddenly the presence of God,” he had

the answer in his heart—in that broad and beautiful faith which finds God's presence here, and makes that "the fountain light of all our seeing." Every morning the Christian soul is ushered, by its waking thoughts, into the presence of God, else where would be the inspiration of prayer? If we take the wings of the morning with which to fly, we cannot go where God is not, for he is with us at the start and never leaves us. He "besets us behind and before, and lays his hand upon us." And to our friend, death was but the passage to another room in the great palace of God, and one more illuminated than this. And surely there is something wrong in the common horror of sudden death among Christians when the first image of perfect blessing is that of Enoch, who walked with God, and was not, for God took him, so that he saw not death; and thus too Moses went, and thus also that glorious prophet, Elijah. Why is it that Christians seem to linger more around the sudden death of the liars, Ananias and Sapphira, rather than around holy Enoch and the Ascension of Jesus? Is it because their religion is more of fear than trust? Or *why* is it? To shrink from the act of dying, is but human; it is instinctive; sudden death relieves from

this. To fear the future, is the impulse of a dark faith, or a guilty soul that creates its own terrors ; and where either of these is felt, sudden death will not be calmly and solemnly preferred. But to our friend this preference seemed to be in harmony with that feeling which desires all transitions to be quiet, calm ; which asks that the Summer may not come in with a lightning-flash of heat, nor the Winter be upon us in a day. Hence his only words ere he died after his last waking, were, as the scream of a faithful ministrant told how the heart of the watcher was smitten, when he said, “Don’t—you will alarm the house.” He wanted no alarm sounded when he was to leave. He asked to go as the twilight fades to prove what a resplendence of stars has been hidden all the day ; or like that sunset which shone upon his burial, when a fresh crimson stole over the cold grey of the west, and warmed the wind that sighed his low requiem at the grave. It is enough for us that he walked with God, and God took him. Our duty is submission and the right use of his Memory.

And, first, of his length of life. He was continued to his eighty-seventh year, and thus we see he was springing into wondering, questioning youth, when the con-

consolidation of the States made them a successful power for American Independence. How real to him were the great changes we can only imagine! How sober to him the orator's words which seem to us but bursting rhetoric! Through all the wonderful growth of our nation, and that most remarkable of all ages which was inaugurated by the liberty of the American people, he was permitted to have his conscious being. On the ears of his boyhood fell the first raptures of a new-born people, and with a lively interest in public affairs, he has seen the mighty progress of the recognition and application of human rights, and the practice of a corresponding humanity. It was good to find in him one who used his large experience not to favor despondency but hope; and he could lift up his voice to tell of the rise and fall of parties, the vanishing of this and that man from power, while still went on the great movement of the nation operating for generations to come, and exerting a power amid the nations for liberty and right. As the filial sons of Noah did not forget the lofty virtues of their father in the sad hour when he wronged himself with wine, so our sire remembered the greatness of his country despite its deeds of wrong. Its years of wis-

dom were not forgotten because of its hours of passion; and how real do the privileges to which the young American is born become, when we sit in the light of the venerable patriot's countenance and hear his story of the past! How specially is this the case when we meet the hopefulness and broad views of such an one as our sire!

In this he was no less a Christian than a patriot, and as a Christian it is that we delight to honor him. He led in the vanguard of Liberal Religion in this community—not "Liberal" in the sense of unrestrained thought, but in that noblest significance which pertains to the best, because most reasonable and generous, interpretation of the Divine Word. He was a Bible Christian. His earliest labors for the Truth we delight to commemorate. Watson, in his *Annals of Philadelphia*, in speaking of a certain building in Kensington, remarks, that said building was once loaned to "Murray, the Universalist preacher, keeping then the doctrine cannon-shot distance from the city." (Vol. I., 432.) Our venerable friend was one of those who helped to bring that doctrine nearer, within range of the sharp guns of the church militant, and it has not yet been shot down. His house was one of the

sainted Murray's homes, and that fact early warmed my heart the more towards him, as my own father's house was one of Murray's most familiar homes, and he rejoiced with my parents in my birth. In those days it was a social martyrdom to espouse warmly and openly the Liberal cause; and we may challenge a comparison of the extent of Infidelity in this community before Liberal Christianity was set up here, and any time since. Our friend was at work for the Master, when exiled Priestley came from Northumberland in this State—his chosen retreat and home—and in this city was eager, by the ministration of a rational faith, to do something against the then abounding Infidelity, throwing manfully into the Christian scale his fame and influence as a Philosopher, and ending his first sermon on distinctive Unitarianism, by a distinct avowal of his faith in the final restoration of all souls to holiness and God. He affirmed it to be “a doctrine eminently calculated to promote alike gratitude to God and benevolence to man, and consequently every other virtue;” and being “perfectly consistent with the belief of the adequate punishment of all sin, it is far from giving an encouragement to sinners.” This was at the opening of the year 1796; and thus the first movement

in behalf of the other form of Liberal Christianity in our city was based upon the recognition and avowal of the Great Restoration, so far as its leader was concerned.

Our sire has been connected with both forms of the Liberal Church in this city; and through all the vicissitudes of that church he has remained true to a consistent career and his earliest love. And one of the last memories I have of him is of a very recent day when he met me in the street, and with that smile that would rise so quietly over his whole face and linger there so long, he told me, with an expression of great delight, how in looking over some old papers, he had met with a letter from Murray, written more than forty years ago. It brought back to his memory the ancient days; and whatever, at any time, you might say of the vicissitudes of the Liberal Church here, he felt nothing but gratitude that God had made the change so great—his age *was* “clearer than the noonday.” He had seen the influence of nobler thoughts of God affecting and softening all the severe creeds; and he had the testimony in his own soul of its beneficent power on the life of the believer. That power we have seen in his character; and to me it was a joy, at his burial, to hear, in earnest prayer, one who had known

him for thirty years, ask that we might be grateful for "his blameless life." It is always sweet to have our thoughts of a good man confirmed by one who has known him far, far more than we have.

It was perhaps only a fresh interest in his earliest faith and that which led him to his reception of the Unitarian idea of God, that brought him to give his countenance to the first efforts in behalf of this Church of the Messiah, and made him a constant worshipper with us when, in humble hope, our temple was opened for the worship of God, the Father of all spirits. I felt it a privilege to minister where he would receive; for I have always had, since my opening ministry, some of the extremely aged and the true saintly ones in my congregations, and never without feeling it was a good thing to have the large experience of the aged to inspire to renewed effort, and also to fortify the argument for the gain of godliness by the test of a longer life than I could offer.

But to know the value of that test in his case, one must have been allowed to enter amid the pleasant and sacred things of home. Admitted *there*, the observer saw what a fresh and freshening thing old age may be, reminding one of the remark of Rogers, the poet, when

speaking of Priestley: "I have," he said, "all my life received delight from the works of great masters in painting; but no picture of theirs has ever affected me so much as a living one I saw. The way in which his daughter hung over him, as he sat in his chair, I can never forget. Though it is nearly forty years ago, it is as present to my mind as if it had been yesterday." Such a scene in our friend's home have I in the picture halls of the soul, as fresh as when it lived before my eye; and what a constraining power over the affections, to mould them to gentleness and truth, do such exhibitions of Christian Old Age exert! The symbol of such age is not so much a blooming vine trained over a decayed tree, as the blooming of Aaron's rod. It is the springing of a fountain of ever abounding interest in things human, showing a lively sympathy with young hearts, delighting to see life enjoyed in every form of innocent happiness. And O how much the world—nay, how much the Church *does* need the power of such a presence in a million homes, to help solve one of the greatest problems of the times, "How shall the natural love of amusement be properly gratified?" Christian old age, by the religion which has imparted its beauty and grace, solves the

problem, as it shows what graces are left untouched, unmodified, in the most solemn period of life, by an affectionate approval of the merry-heartedness of the young.

“He still retained

His manly sense and energy of mind.

Virtuous and wise he was, but not severe;

He still remembered that he once was young:

His easy presence checked no decent joy,

And laughing could instruct.”

And here in this ever-green freshness of Christian old age, is the great lesson of the life and character of our venerable friend. It was a freshness that had its roots in divine things—that drank its nourishment from that “river of God which is full of water.” He loved religion because it was “the life of God in the soul.” It was not a thing exempt from laws and conditions. It was a growth that must be nourished, and he fed his religious life by appropriate food. He was a faithful Church goer. He honored God in the use of established ordinances of worship, because of what they had been in the diffusion of the Christian religion, and for what they had been to him. Every year of life. nay, every week has its peculiar worship; and he placed himself in the line of God’s

requirements, knowing that there the best thing would be found. Old fires were rekindled, and new fuel was laid by the altar of sacrifice. He was no half-day Church goer; but he sought the blessings of the sanctuary when the Sabbath evening lights were lit; and he was with us at our Wednesday evening service. And thus it was that he was always near the deep well of Divine influence, and he always had wherewith to draw its waters. Wonderfully well did he unite a remembrance of our common mortality and the conviction of immortal life. He shrank not from communion with the dead. The burial service was familiar to him, and it did him good to see the various forms in which a Christian trust in immortality would manifest itself. And when all this was made personal to him, his sentiment was that of the Apostle, "For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain." Thus religion became to him an all diffused life. It touched and sanctified everything. It was the plucking from a vine that had never refused its royal cluster. It was a psalm along the highways of the holy land to the festivals of the City of God. It was, in view of death,

"The grand, triumphal arch
Through which the saints to glory march."

And having passed, he is hidden from our gaze by the golden mist that droops from that rainbow arch, before which we must stand with reverent trust and hope, in humble prayer. If, like Joseph in Egypt, we are ever impelled to ask, "The old man of whom ye spake, is he yet alive?" an answer shall come through "the most holy faith" he cherished, and from the impossibility that such goodness should die.

Here then we must end our public mention of our venerable friend and fellow worshipper, still holding his memory dear and talking with his image in our hearts. Standing above his grave, and seeming to behold him once more approaching with that brisk step that made us forget his age, and that smile which sunned our path,—looking into his sweet face and calm eyes, what an awful, degrading, and contemptible thing is the denial of man's immortality! Here is so large an experience; so many faculties developed; such a wealth of affections stored up; such an accumulation of powers; such a boundless trust in God,—that the idea of the annihilation of mind is a most preposterous thing; and equally so is that notion, advocated in this community, that saves mind only as some massive cloud drinks up millions of vapors from the sea, or as the wind of to-day blows about us some of the

dust that years ago may have been a part of animated forms. In Christian old age we see the mind at death but as the noble and richly freighted ship that waits only for the touch of the turning tide to bear it from the shore to sea, where its sails shall be kissed by spicy winds from isles that live only to our faith. Beyond the silent sea the spirit hath its everlasting home. *There, O Sire!* thine age shall be clearer than the noonday; thou shalt shine forth; thou shalt be as that fresh morning when God, from his affluent hand, seems to have dropped a new world, a new existence, a new worship. We have not lost thee; thou hast but gone before.

CLOSING PRAYER.

O THOU whose years fail not! who renewest our life and nourisheth in old age! Unto thee, in the name of the Redeemer, do we lift our prayer for the ministrations of Thy grace and truth to her who survives the departure of the aged brother, dwelling with us now, the last link of the generation with which he was united. In her old age be Thou her strength and refuge. May her hope be steadfast in Thee. Through all mists may Bethlehem's star keep shining. Help us all to be faithful to the ministries her happiness may require, and may our hearts be full of the gentleness which become our service to the old. Prepare her and us for all Thy will! Help us to live nearer to Thee; and may Thy love be our strong habitation, to which we may continually resort in our weakness, exposure and sorrow, finding there the all-supporting and imperishable hope, through Jesus Christ our Saviour. Amen.